

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

Methods and apparatus for providing operator services to callers in a fully or partially automated manner are disclosed. In addition, the present invention is directed to methods and apparatus for providing new telephone services, e.g., the forwarding of messages to non-published telephone number customers. It is also directed to methods and apparatus that can be used to detect, report and correct operator input errors.

Automated, e.g., unmanned, apparatus of the present invention are capable of interfacing with conventional telephone switches using known operator protocols. This allows automated devices of the present invention to appear to existing telephone switches as manned operator positions capable of servicing telephone calls. In accordance with the present invention, the unmanned apparatus of the present invention is assigned one or more operator position identifiers conventionally used to identify manned operator positions. The interaction of the automated apparatus of the present invention and a telephone switch involves the use of the assigned operator position identifiers to identify the apparatus of the present invention to the switch as one or more operational operator positions. Once logged in with the telephone switch, the apparatus of the present invention can service calls normally handled by human operators, without the need for a human operator's involvement.